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EDGAR ALLAN POE'S THE CONQUELOR WORKS



RICHARD
CORBEN



2012 Eisner
Hall of Fame
Inductee





EDGAR ALLAN POE'S
THE
CONQUEROR
WORM

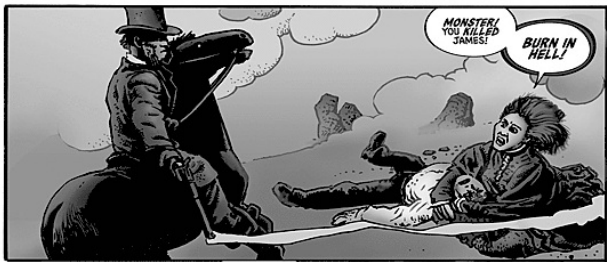
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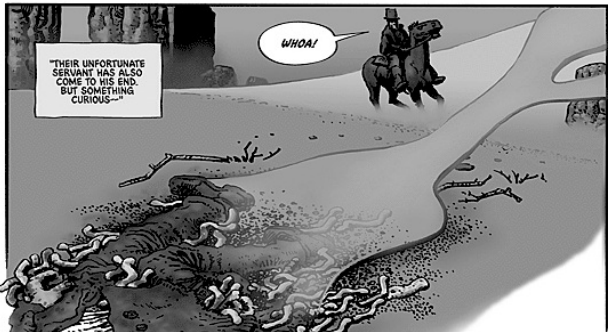
LETTERING BY
NATE PIEKOS OF BLAMBOT®

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Editors **Scott Allie** and **Daniel Chabon** Publisher **Mike Richardson**

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"THEIR UNFORTUNATE
SERVANT HAS ALSO
COME TO HIS END.
BUT SOMETHING
CURIOUS--"

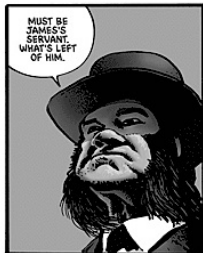
WHOA!

EDGAR ALLAN POE'S
— THE —
**CONQUEROR
WORM**

WITH MAG THE HAG

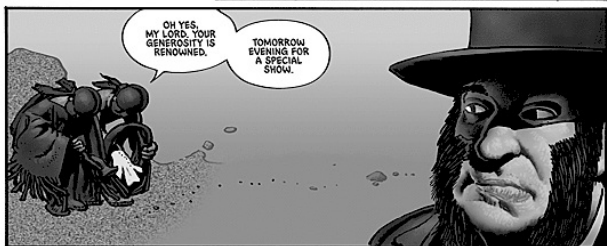
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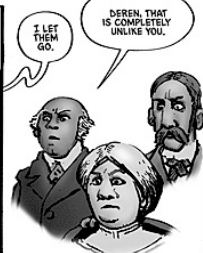
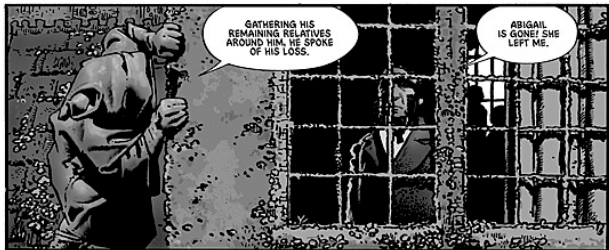
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"SIT IN A THEATRE,
TO SEE A PLAY OF
HOPES AND FEARS..."

WHAT?
WE HAVE
TO SIT ON
THESE?

MONA,
CAN'T YOU JUST
RELAX AND TRY
TO ENJOY THE
SHOW?

OUCH!
SOMETHING
BIT ME!



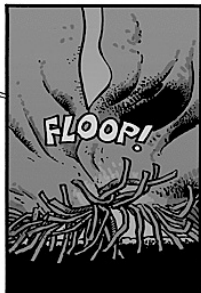
WELCOME
TO THE THEATRE
OF DREAMS.

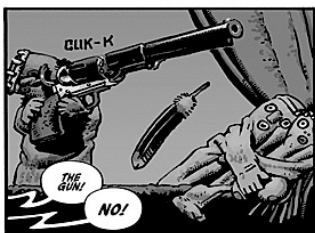
TONIGHT, A
SHOW MADE JUST
FOR YOU, LADIES
AND GENTS!

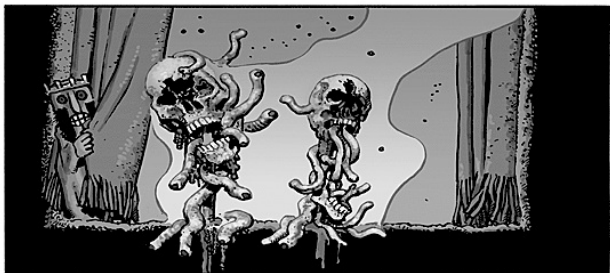
MEET OUR ACTORS—
THE KING, AND THE
QUEEN, AND THE
KNAVE, AND PERHAPS
JUST ONE MORE AT
THE END.





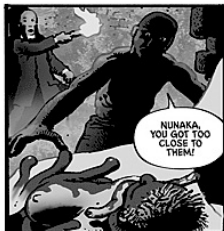




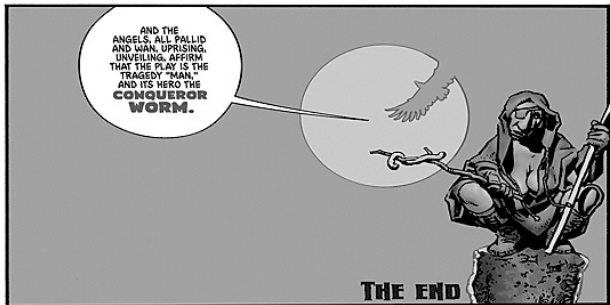


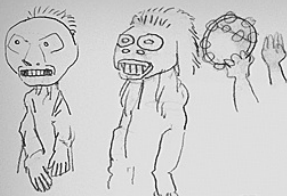




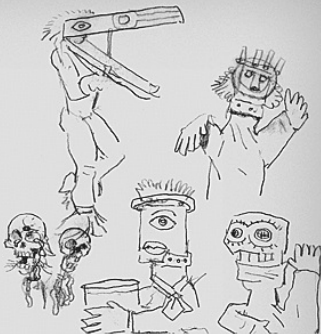








The Conqueror
Work



THE CON-
QUER-
OR
WORK



puppeteer
collects small
animal skulls
for his puppets
cleans them
in water



SKETCHBOOK

with notes by Richard Corben



I LOVE PUPPETS! I always have. When I saw that Poe mentioned puppets in the poem, I knew how I would adapt it into a story. I started drawing every kind I could think of: Hand puppets, rod puppets, marionettes, Bunraku, even shadow puppets. I settled on the simplest, the hand puppet.



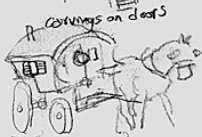
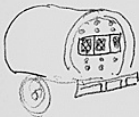
THE POEM MENTIONS "condor wings," and I thought it would be neat to have one, a sort of mascot flapping around. But those things are huge, too big to perch on the puppeteer's arm, so I used a turkey vulture instead.



California condor
45" long. 9 1/2 feet wingspan
18-23 pounds



25-35"
6' wingspan
Miss
Grunt



THE PUPPETEER'S CART is roughly patterned after the Gypsy cart. Sometimes a lot of research and designing are done but not used. Here it was used only in one panel.

THE CONQUEROR WORM

LO! 'tis a gala night
Within the lonesome latter years!
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theatre, to see
A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
Mutter and mumble low,
And hither and thither fly—
Mere puppets they, who come and go
At bidding of vast formless things
That shift the scenery to and fro,
Flapping from out their Condor wings
Invisible Wo!

That motley drama—oh, be sure
It shall not be forgot!
With its Phantom chased for evermore,
By a crowd that seize it not,
Through a circle that ever returneth in
To the self-same spot,
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout
A crawling shape intrude!
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
The scenic solitude!
It writhes!—it writhes!—with mortal pangs
The mimes become its food,
And seraphs sob at vermin fangs
In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all!
And, over each quivering form,
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm,
And the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"
And its hero the Conqueror Worm.



RICHARD CORBEN was born in Missouri and grew up in Sunflower, Kansas, and he's been drawing all of his life. After art school, Corben started drawing underground comix and fanzines. About this time Warren Publishing Company began a series of black-and-white horror comics: *Creepy*, *Eerie*, and *Vampirella*. They were a perfect match for Corben's interests, and he drew several stories for *Creepy*; unfortunately, none of them were accepted. But he persevered, and James Warren, with his editor Bill DuBay, started sending Richard scripts to draw. With the spread of underground comix, requests to reprint Corben's underground features began to appear. His fantasy character Den from *Grim Wit* went on to the French *Metal Hurlant*, then back to the American *Heavy Metal*. Corben then started Fantagor, a publishing company mainly devoted to publishing his comics, while continuing to draw for other American comics publishers—DC, Marvel, Dark Horse, and others. Richard Corben was inducted into the Will Eisner Awards Hall of Fame at San Diego Comic-Con International in July 2012.